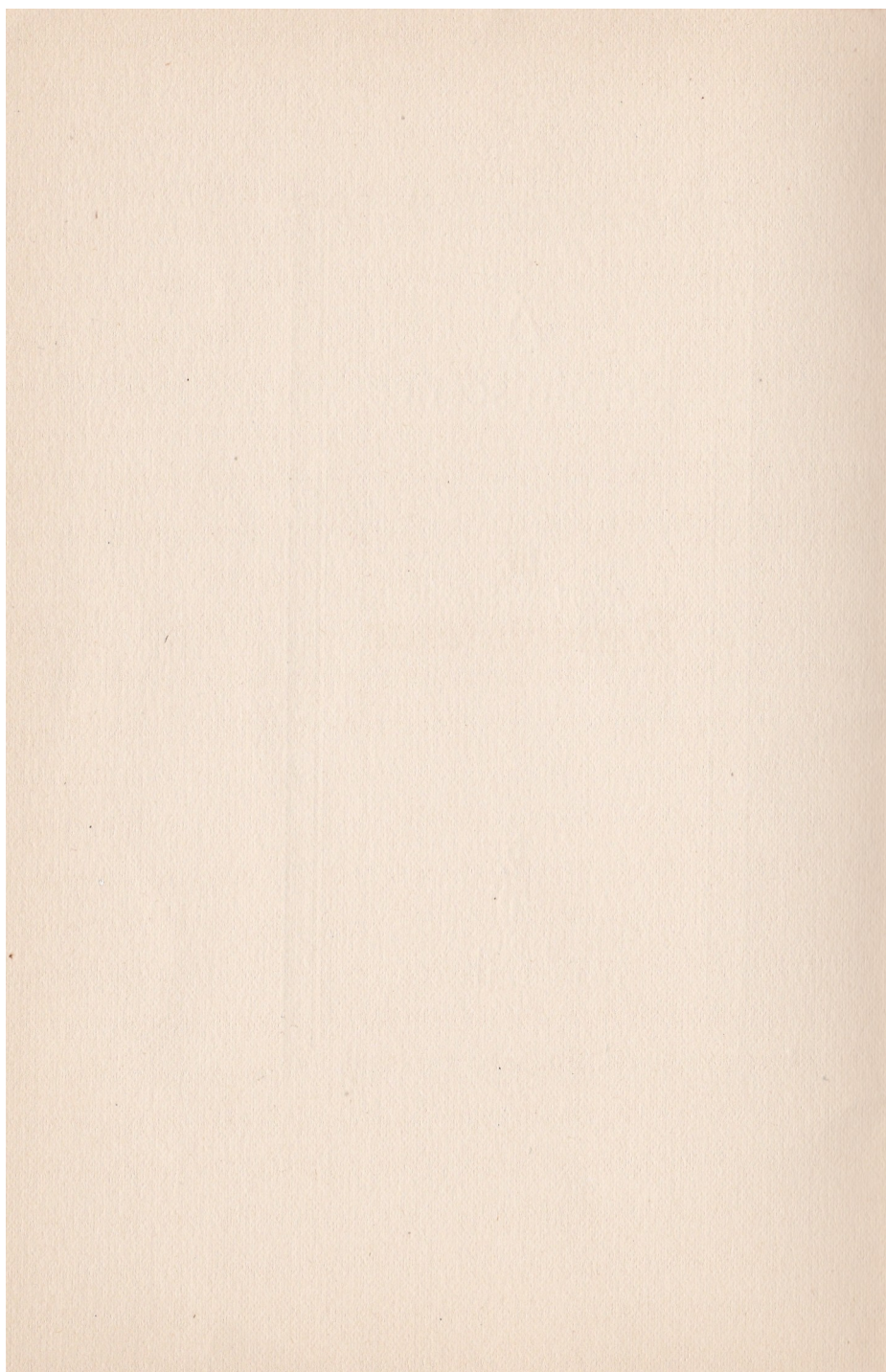


A Reminiscence

By
Mrs. J. W. Strevell



Buffalo:
The Peter Paul Book Co.
1897



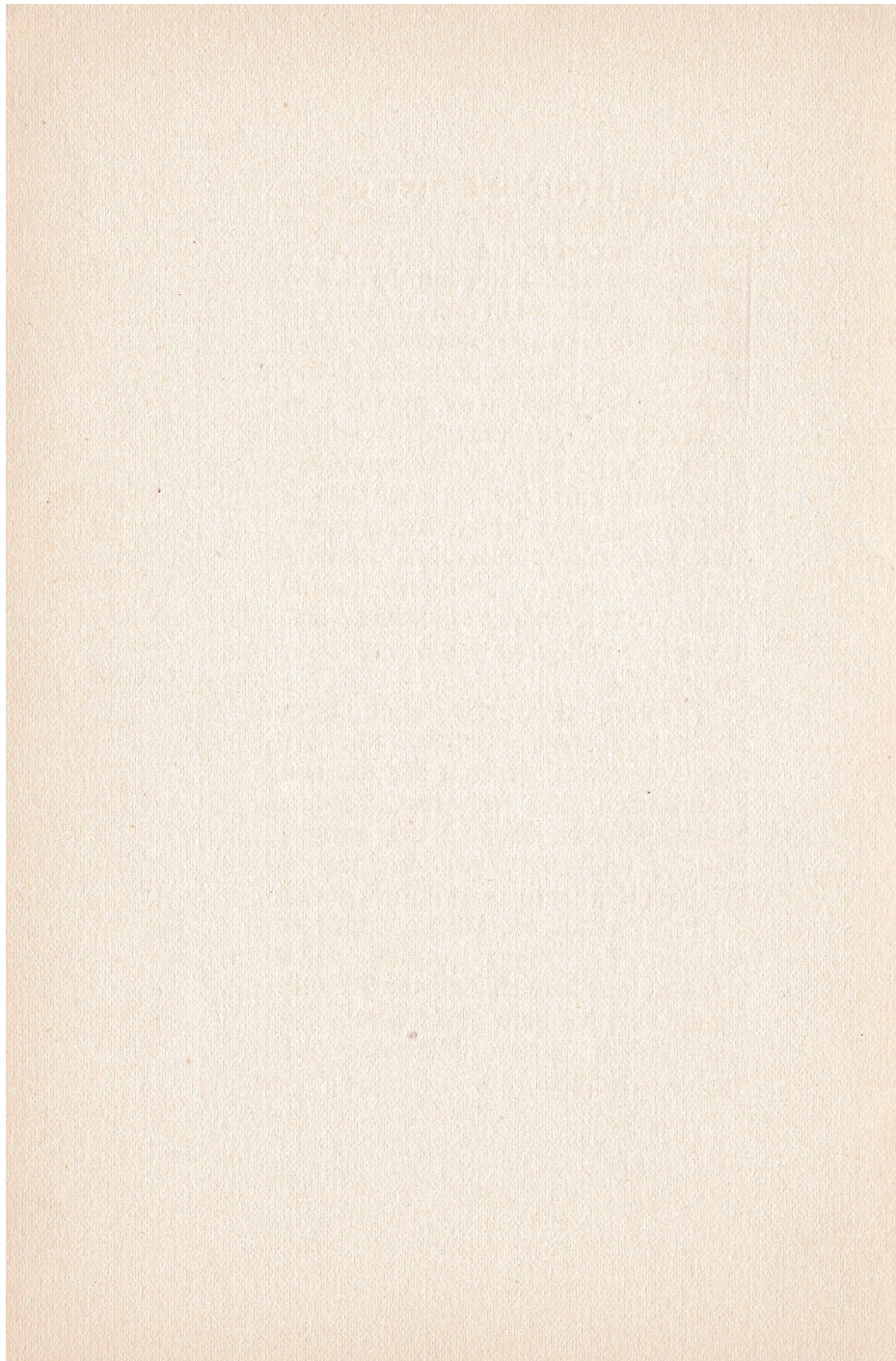
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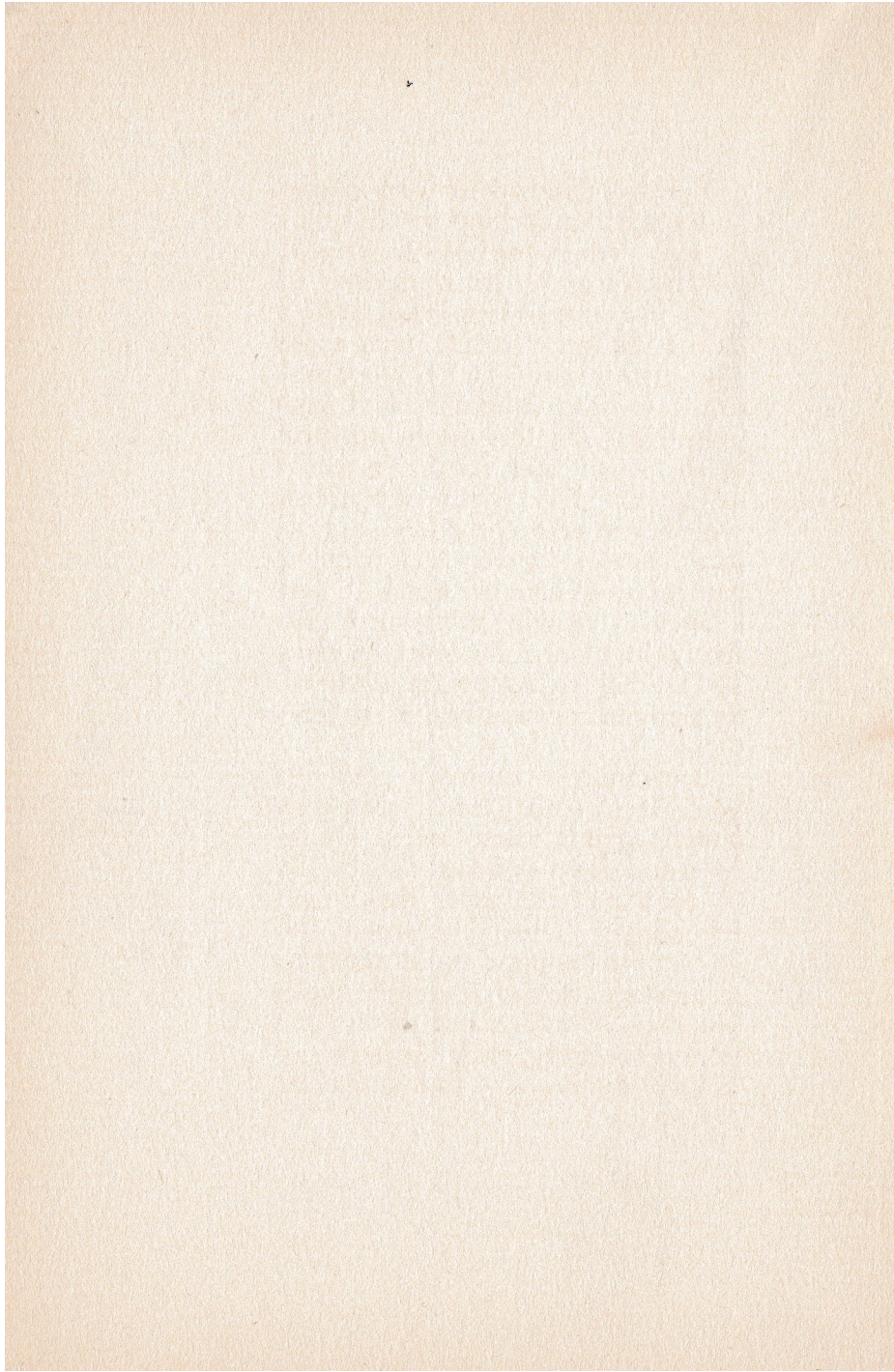
IN the afterglow, as one sits calmly down, and in imagination revisits the scenes of early life, the heart seems to go back to some one place, dearer than all others—the one place where memory loves best to linger and review the thoughts and impressions which came to us in tender years, and which, if true to ourselves have clung to us all, along the journey of life. Alas, if we have allowed the worldliness, cares, and perplexities of maturer years to crowd out the early impressions of innocent childhood, so often the dawning of spiritual life and the beginning of that sweet relationship between ourselves and the infinite Father, who comes down to us through the beauties of nature!

Looking backward this November morning, I see my early home—the pleasant house, with its yellow paint, its vine-clad porches and windows, surrounded by beautiful oaks, and in the background a luxuriant gar-



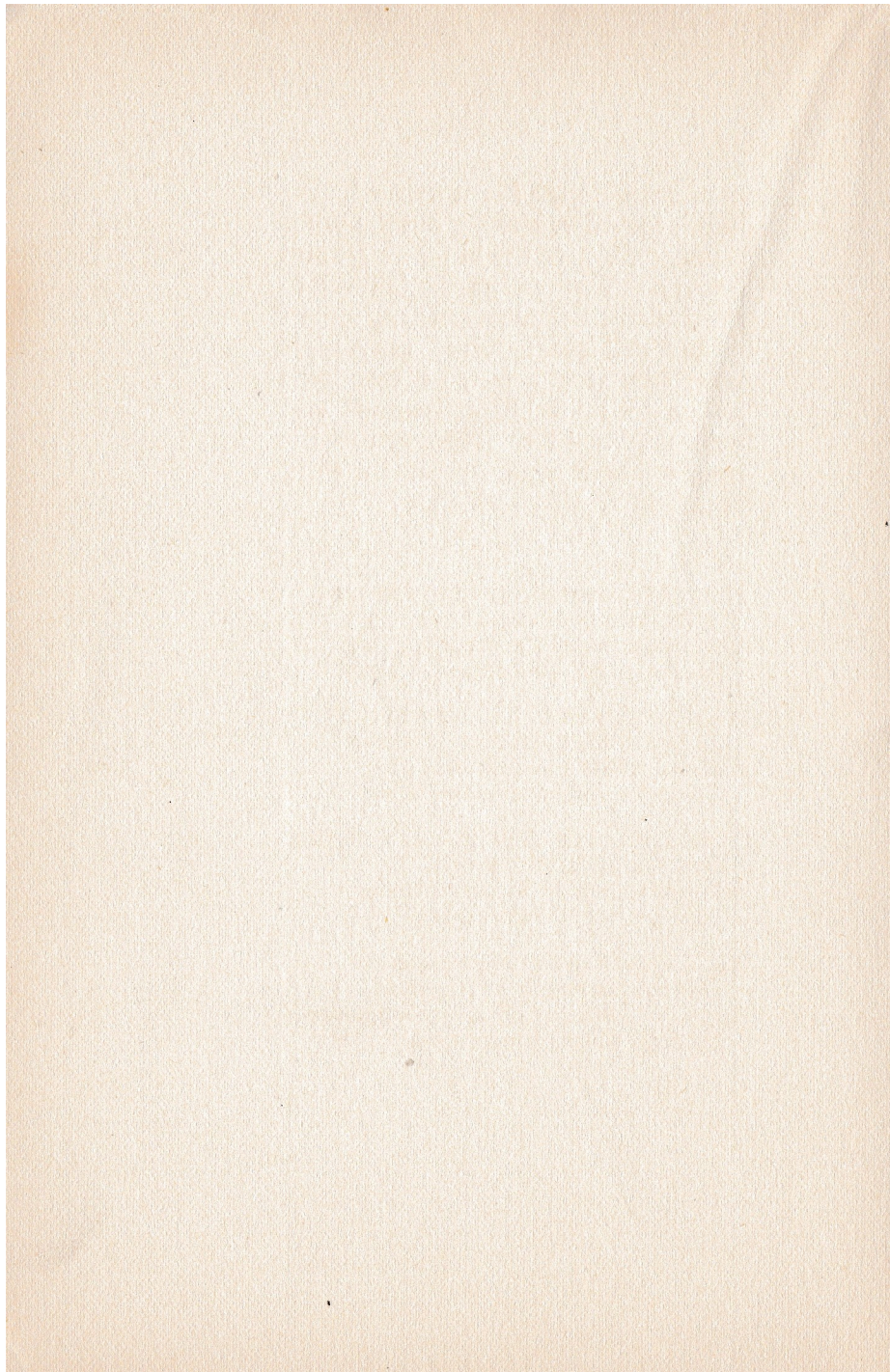
den and orchard, with fruit golden and red hanging from boughs that bent under their heavy weight; while here and there were fields of ripening grain, and grassy meadows bright with clover blossoms, shedding their fragrance all around, and musical with the humming of bees industriously gathering their winter store. Such was the home where my childhood and youth were passed, which will ever bring tender recollections of shady trees and winding paths, of meadow lilies and modest blue violets, which bloomed profusely in the grassy yard in early springtime.

Turning reverently aside from these hallowed associations, my mind wanders along a shaded and well-beaten path to a maple grove, one half mile distant—the special care and delight of my dear father. It contained forty acres, from which he had had all the timber removed, except the sugar-maples. The ground was leveled, and seeded with grass, leaving here and there some pretty spot in the wilderness and beauty of nature.



Here we often spent many happy hours together, seeking out the wildest spots, where the bitter-sweet and prickly-ash grew, he explaining to me their medicinal properties, while I picked the great white may-apple blossoms at our feet, or wandered away to find bluebells and wild columbine. In this grove, too, the maple sugar was made, in early springtime, after which everything was cleared up and the trees put on their loveliest garb and arrayed themselves in summer tints. Then I loved to ramble alone, or sit in shady nooks and listen to the wild bird's song, or watch the squirrels as they ran and chattered in the tree-tops.

Sometimes I ventured into an adjoining wood, and wandered among great forest trees, whose solemn stillness and deep, dark shade inspired me with awe; and almost tremblingly I would return to the grove, and the pure, sweet sunlight, streaming down through leafy branches, would chase away my fears and bring back the sense of security and peace. This is the one



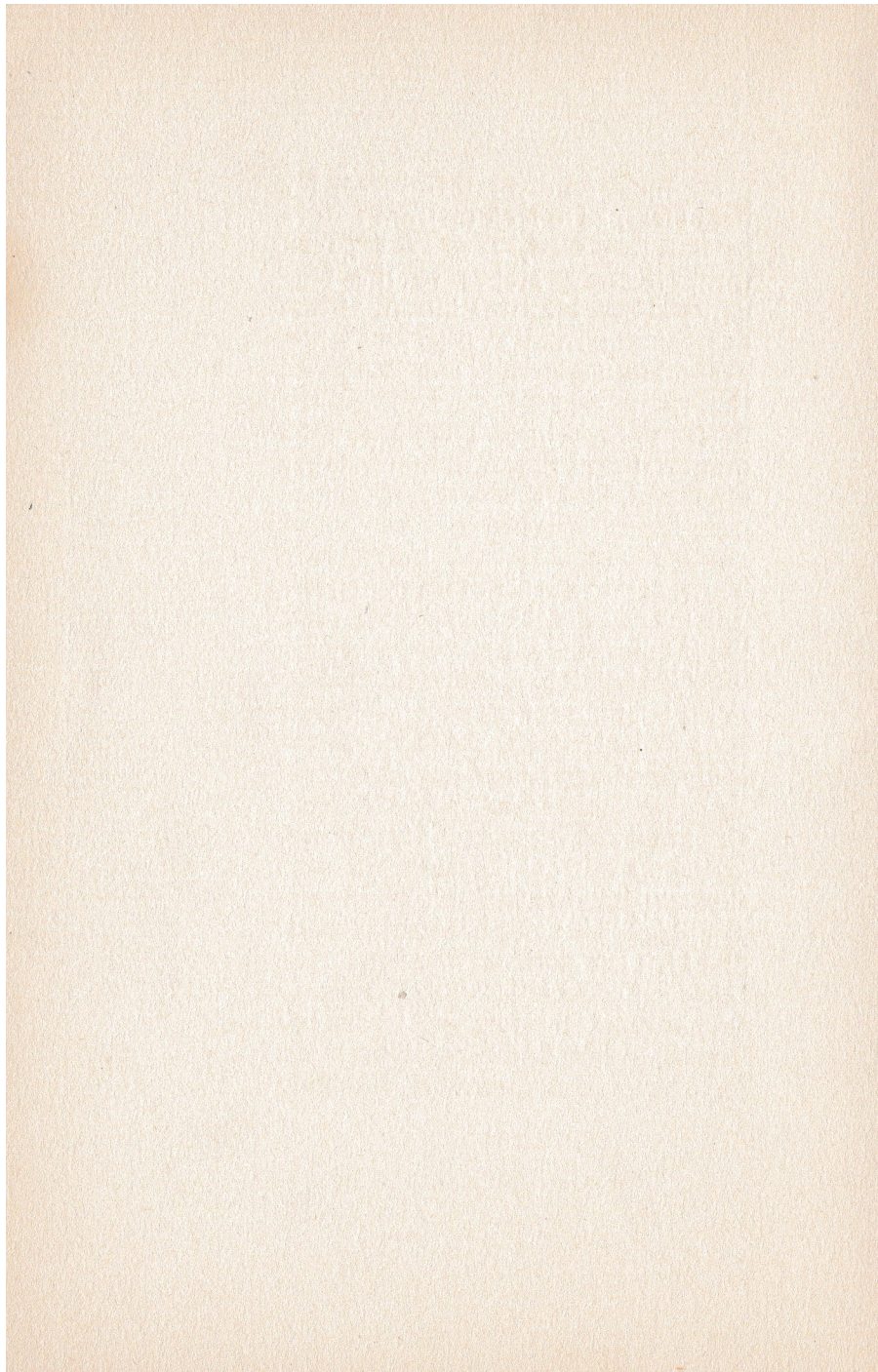
place most fondly remembered, for here I learned to look up from nature to nature's God, and as I gazed through leafy arches to the blue dome above, He came into my heart in the "still, small voice" and whispered His love and promises, and the rainbow of hope spanned the horizon of my life. Here it was the immortal soul began to inquire after God, and, lo, He was there.

There, in the swaying of the tree-tops,
In the music of the bird,
In the murmur of the brooklet,
All the sweet, glad sounds I heard.

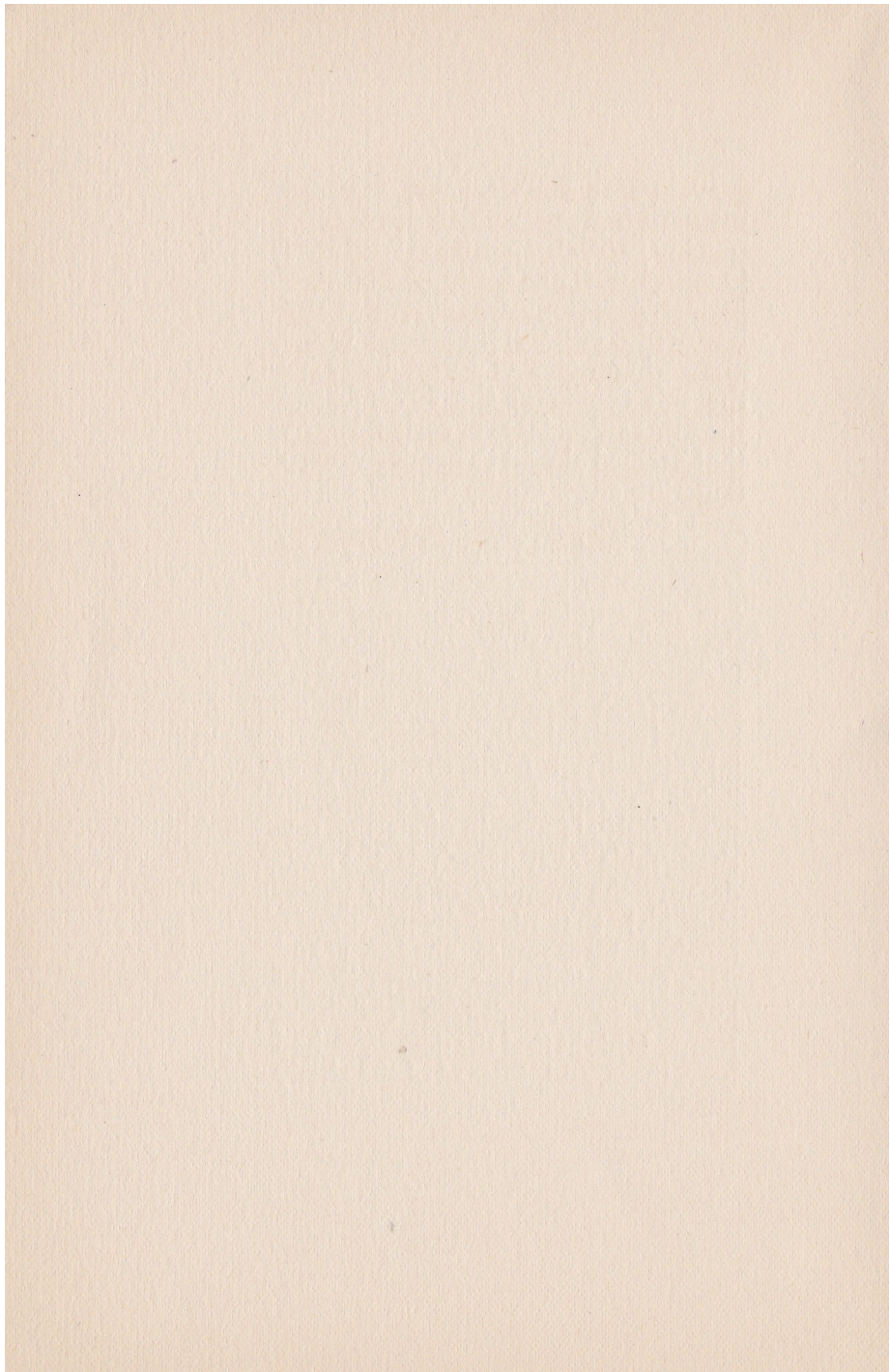
In the brightness of the morning,
As tender blossoms oped to view,
Warmed to life by early sunlight,
And refreshed by evening dew,

Or when the snow-cloud quickly gathered,
And the patter of the rain
And mutterings of distant thunder
Sent me to my home again,

Still I felt His gracious presence,
Did not doubt His loving care;
And now, far on the journey homeward,
He doth all my burdens bear.



In lingering over these precious memories, I sometimes long once more to revisit the scenes of long ago; to spend one more sunny morning in early springtime among these harmonies of nature, to listen to the answering notes of forest birds or the soft cooing of the dove; to see the same sweet faces of early flowers, that seemed almost to break through lingering snow-banks in their eagerness to be touched by the warm sunlight and add their beauty and fragrance to the enchanting scene; one more quiet hour, hearing only the music of nature, untouched by life's distracting cares, and feeling again fresh inspiration to a higher life and nobler deeds, that flows down into the heart from the throne of light, in refreshing streams from the perpetual fountain of eternal, unchangeable love. Such is the day-dream—the memory of early years. But ah! the night-dream comes, touched by somber shadows and dark forebodings lest, when I should journey to my distant childhood home, I might find the destroyer had been there, and, instead of the shady



grove and tender blossoms, I should see upturned sod, and fields of grain waving in the sunlight. But I hasten from the thought, and cherish only pleasant memories of the long ago. I tread the wayside paths under rustling leaves, in the companionship of flowers, and still hear the whisperings of divine love; and my grateful heart responds, "My Father."

MRS. J. W. STREVELL.

